

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Friday 22 September 1978 CG NIDC 78/222



NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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LATE ITEM

NIGERIA: Politics Resume

25X1 [] The removal of the 12-year ban on politics yesterday to permit the organization of political parties for elections next spring has brought Nigeria to the last and most difficult phase of its planned transition to civilian rule by October 1979. The passage is likely to have stormy episodes, and the installation of a civilian government cannot be firmly predicted. The civilian elite and the military leadership remain committed, however, to achieving constitutional rule on schedule.

25X1 [] Many informed Nigerians have doubts about the country's ability to withstand the stress of open political activity. They fear that politicking will exacerbate the regional and ethnic tensions that have built up this year because of the constituent assembly battle over a proposed Islamic court of appeals. They also acknowledge that Nigerian politics remain confrontational and that there is little sign that a new breed of politicians has developed.

25X1 [] Much depends on the capacity of politicians to rise above narrow ethnic, regional, and religious considerations. Should campaigning generate communal violence and seriously threaten public order, the military might suspend the political process to let passions cool or cancel its civil rule plan. If the regime did not act, it could be toppled by officers who have not had their share of power or by those who are profiting by the present system.

25X1 [] Now that the ban has been lifted, a multiparty system should emerge, generally along regional and ethnic lines. Presidential contenders will be required by the new constitution to put together broad coalitions to obtain a majority vote nationwide and one-fourth of the votes in 13 of the 19 states. The provision is calculated to promote a national outlook in political activity. Nonetheless, the political situation is still fluid, and no clear presidential frontrunner has emerged.

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Friday, 22 September 1978.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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SYRIA: Steadfastness Front

25X1 [] Syrian President Assad is apparently trying to develop an Arab consensus to isolate Egyptian President Sadat. In his first public comments since the Camp David talks ended, Assad somberly criticized Sadat for abandoning the Arab cause and agreeing to a separate peace with Israel.

25X1 [] In his remarks on Wednesday night to the Arab hardliners' summit in Damascus, Assad carefully avoided attacking President Carter. He tried to appeal to moderate Arab states--especially Jordan and Saudi Arabia--as well as to the hardliners in the hope of forming a broad Arab front opposed to an Egyptian-Israeli settlement. Assad emphasized that the Camp David accords do not promise to restore Arab sovereignty to Jerusalem or to the West Bank--issues of particular importance to the Jordanians and the Saudis.

25X1 [] The initial critical official reactions to Camp David from Jordan and Saudi Arabia have clearly encouraged Assad to pursue this strategy. Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam praised both statements yesterday and stressed the theme of Arab unity. Assad's endorsement of Jordan's statement reflects his concern about being isolated if King Hussein accepts the Camp David framework. Syria recognizes that, if the moderate Arabs join the negotiations, the hardliners will be unable to provide much meaningful support to an isolated Syria.

25X1 [] Syria's radical allies, particularly the rejectionist Palestinians, are certain to urge Assad to break completely with the peace process as they have at previous summits of the Steadfastness Front. Assad will probably continue to avoid such a precipitous act. []

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ISRAEL: Dayan Smoothing the Way

25X1 [] Israeli Foreign Minister Dayan, in a television interview, has sought to minimize Israel's concessions on the Palestinian issue--apparently to smooth the way for Knesset approval of the Camp David accords. His remarks reveal the tough stance Israel is likely to adopt once negotiations resume over the status of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as over the Golan Heights should Syria agree to hold talks.

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[] To allay public fears, Dayan made clear that Israel retains a veto over the arrangements for establishing a self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza. He said the *status quo* would continue if agreement with the Arabs could not be reached. Similarly, Dayan indicated that the transitional regime would continue indefinitely if no peace treaty were reached with Jordan within five years.

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[] Dayan declared that Israel had made no commitment on the specific powers of the autonomous regime and that Israeli military and settlement activity would not be subject to local Arab authority. Dayan indicated the Israeli settlements would be one of the subjects of further negotiations after the end of the three-month freeze Israeli leaders say they have agreed to.

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[] Dayan also maintained that Israel had not agreed to withdraw its forces from the West Bank--only the military government--and suggested that there would be only a minimal change in the deployment of Israeli troops. If Israel now had 10,000 soldiers in the West Bank and Gaza, Dayan said, 9,000 would remain.

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[] On the Palestinian refugee problem, Dayan said that Israel had not agreed to allow any of the refugees who left in 1948 to return to Israel or the West Bank and Gaza and that Israel continues to insist that they be resettled where they are now. Only those refugees who left the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 will be permitted to return, Dayan said--and then only on terms acceptable to Israel, which will be determined through negotiations with Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians.

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[] Dayan denied that the territorial agreement with Egypt sets a precedent for negotiations with Syria over the Golan Heights. The only basis for such negotiations, he maintained, is UN Resolution 242. []

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VIETNAM-CHINA: Relations

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[] *//Sino-Vietnamese relations have continued to deteriorate in recent weeks, and there is little likelihood they will improve any time soon. China may have severed party-to-party relations with Vietnam, the talks in Hanoi over Vietnam's treatment of its Chinese minority are deadlocked, and*

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tensions along the border remain high. Both sides, however, evidently have kept main force units away from the border to minimize the chance of a major clash.//

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[REDACTED] //Peking's icy, two-sentence message to Hanoi on its national day in early September suggests that China may have broken party ties with Vietnam. For the first time, China's telegram was not addressed to Vietnamese party leaders and excluded the party titles of the Chinese signatories. If Peking has broken ties, it is reading Hanoi out of the Communist movement and putting Sino-Vietnamese relations on a par with Sino-Soviet ties. The Chinese media, moreover, have not referred to Vietnam as a "socialist state" in more than five months.//

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[REDACTED] //Both countries are using the talks on Vietnamese treatment of its Chinese minority strictly as a forum to air publicly their grievances against each other. In seven sessions to date no significant proposals have been advanced. The impasse, however, has allowed Peking to curtail the influx of refugees, which has taxed Chinese resources.//

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[REDACTED] //Tensions along the Sino-Vietnamese border remain high. Vietnam asserted Friday that there have been more than 18 incidents since the talks began on 8 August, and China also has reported several incidents in recent weeks. Most seem to have been minor affairs, although two apparently involved fatalities.//

(S NF NC OC) //The incidents serve as a pointed reminder to Vietnam of the increased pressure China could bring to bear. Peking, however, is clearly not contemplating such action at present.

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EGYPT: Governmental Changes

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[REDACTED] President Sadat is planning extensive changes in Egypt's national and regional governments. The changes will be part of Sadat's response to longstanding criticism of the performance of his Prime Minister as well as an extension of his effort of several months to mobilize support and solidify control in anticipation of a new and more controversial phase of peace negotiations.

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[REDACTED] Sadat told a gathering of Egyptian students in the US on Tuesday that he will carry out a "complete change in the structure of the state and its departments" on his return to Cairo this week. He called the promised changes an "administrative revolution."

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[REDACTED] The changes will not be entirely keyed to the peace process. Since May, Sadat has been responding to those who have criticized the government of Prime Minister Salim--and indirectly the President--for ineffectiveness and corruption.

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[REDACTED] To date, Sadat's measures have included suppression of two political parties and their leaders; silencing of critical journalists and newspapers; disbanding of the Arab Socialist Union, an umbrella organization that had governed political activity in Egypt since 1952; and the establishment of a new political party, which Sadat heads. Sadat is likely to hold a party congress soon and may tour Egypt's provinces in coming weeks.

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[REDACTED] Egyptians expect the cabinet changes to be extensive. Sadat must at minimum name a replacement for Foreign Minister Kamil, who resigned during negotiations at Camp David. He may also name a new prime minister. The creation of Sadat's new

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party has left Salim without a viable political organization; most assembly members belonging to the ruling centrist party that Salim headed flocked to Sadat's party. Salim has so far played no role in organizing Sadat's new party.

25X1 [] Sadat's political "restructuring" is far from complete. The popular response, at least before Camp David, was unenthusiastic and tinged with cynicism. The most important practical effect of the changes would be the emergence of some new political faces and a deliberate lessening of Sadat's aloofness from the day-to-day political process. [] 25X1

USSR: Interest in Cape Verde

25X1 [] *Soviet interest in Cape Verde continues to increase as Moscow searches for alternative or additional facilities to support its military presence in Africa. The Soviets have thus far offered Cape Verde increased military and economic assistance as well as additional Soviet advisory personnel.*

25X1 [] The Soviets contributed four small vessels to the fledgling Cape Verde Navy and may send additional naval advisers as well. Cape Verde has also agreed to buy all of its diesel oil from the USSR instead of from the Netherlands and Venezuela.

25X1 [] There has already been an increase in Soviet personnel in Cape Verde. Ten Soviet technicians are working on aircraft that transit Cape Verde while transporting Cuban personnel to various points in Africa. Six military advisers are working on the first vessel donated by the Soviets, and four Soviets are assigned to the office of Defense Minister Da Luz. These advisers are responsible primarily for instructing the militia on small arms tactics and crowd control.

25X1 [] The Soviets are also interested in assigning an ambassador to Cape Verde, although the government is normally reluctant to allow resident ambassadors. Only the Portuguese have a resident ambassador there.

25X1 [] The Soviets may encounter other problems as well. President Pereira, who is eager to reinforce his nonaligned credentials, is not likely to allow Moscow regular access to air and naval facilities. He has, for example, rejected a Soviet

offer of four MIG fighters because it was tied to the provision
of Soviet pilots for the aircraft.

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